



POLICY FOR PROTECTING VULNERABLE ADULTS

Amigos aims to ensure that any vulnerable adults, are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers in this organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Selection

- All applicants to our organisation will complete an application form.
- Short listed applicants will be asked to attend interview.
- Short listed applicants will be asked to provide references and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of an appointment.

Screening

- Where relevant to the post, the successful applicant will be asked to agree to an appropriate disclosure. Disclosures will be requested prior to the applicant taking up post.

Training

- The successful applicant will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure.
- Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis, and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practicing skills needed for the work.
- Training on specific areas such as health & safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers, and will be regularly reviewed.

Supervision

- All staff and selected volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide regular feedback and support.
- Every member of staff and selected volunteers will attend an annual review, where their performance, skills, motivation and expectations will be discussed. Annual reviews will be minuted and copies made available to the member of staff / volunteer.

Amigos will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

Protecting Adults, Tackling Abuse

Amigos is committed to preventing the abuse of adults and responding promptly when abuse is suspected.

These pages tell you what to do and who to contact if you or someone you know is a person who is vulnerable and is being abused.

Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness.

What is adult abuse?

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person's human and civil rights. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

Abuse can happen anywhere – in a residential or nursing home, a hospital, in the workplace, at a day centre or

educational establishment, in supported housing or in the street.

Forms of abuse include:

- Physical Abuse such as hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misusing medication, scalding, restraint, hair pulling.
- Sexual Abuse such as rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not have consented, or to which they were pressurised into consenting.
- Psychological or Emotional Abuse such as threats of harm or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other form of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, being prevented from receiving services or support.
- Financial or Material Abuse such as theft, fraud or exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance, misuse of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect such as ignoring medical or physical care needs and preventing access to health, social care or educational services or withholding the necessities of life such as food, drink and heating.
- Discriminatory Abuse such as that based on race or sexuality or a person's disability and other forms of harassment or slurs.
- Institutional abuse can sometimes happen in residential homes, nursing homes or hospitals when people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care, neglect and poor practice that affects the whole of that service.

Any of these forms of abuse can be either deliberate or be the result of ignorance, or lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Often if a person is being abused in one way they are also being abused in other ways.

Who might be causing the abuse?

The person who is responsible for the abuse is very often well known to the person abused and could be:

- A paid carer or volunteer
- A health worker, social care or other worker
- A relative, friend or neighbour
- Another resident or service user
- An occasional visitor or someone who is providing a service
- People who deliberately exploit vulnerable people

What do you do if you are being abused or you suspect that someone you know may be the victim of abuse?

You should contact one of the numbers at the foot of this page as soon as possible. Your concerns will be taken seriously and will receive prompt attention.

What if the abuse is also a crime?

If the abuse is also a crime such as assault, racial harassment, rape or theft you should involve the police to prevent someone else from being abused. If the police are involved we will work with them and with you to support you.

If you are worried about contacting the police you can always contact social services to talk things over first.

If immediate action is needed the emergency services should be contacted by dialling 999.

What will happen if abuse is reported?

If abuse is reported to social services or a community mental health team, a member of staff will come and talk to the person as quickly as possible.

If there is immediate danger we will aim to visit you or the person about whom you are concerned straight away

If there is a significant risk of harm we will aim to visit within 24 hours

For other reports of abuse we will normally visit within 5 working days

The person dealing with the report will work with the person who is being abused to help them make any decisions. They will provide help and support in taking action to try to end the abuse and enable them to ensure it does not happen again.

You may want someone to contact us on your behalf and to nominate someone to speak and act for you.

We will not normally do anything or share information with other people without the permission of the person who is being abused. The only exception to this is in situations where others may be at risk of abuse or the person is not able to make decisions for themselves because of mental disability.

Vulnerable adults and adult protection

It is every adult's right to live free from abuse in accordance with the principles of respect, dignity, autonomy, privacy and equity.

Should you have any concerns regarding a vulnerable person you should contact that person's care manager (if known) or, if you need to make referral or require general information about social services, please contact one of their access and information officers.

Who is included under the heading of vulnerable adult?

"An adult (a person aged 18 or over) who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

(Definition referred to in the *Consultation Paper 'Who Decides' 1997* and in the report *'Making Decisions' 1999*).

This could include people with;

- Learning disabilities
- Mental health problems
- Older people
- People with a physical disability or impairment.

Their need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as;

- Physical frailty or chronic illness
- Sensory impairment
- Challenging behaviour
- Drug or alcohol problems
- Social or emotional problems
- Poverty or homelessness.

What do we mean by abuse?

"Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons". Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.

Types of abuse

Physical abuse:

- Hitting, slapping and scratching.
- Pushing or rough handling.
- Assault and battery.
- Restraining without justifiable reasons.
- Misuse of medication.
- Inappropriate sanctions including; deprivation of food, clothing, warmth and health care needs.

Sexual abuse:

- Sexual activity, to which an adult client has not, or cannot consent, or has been pressured into.
- Sexual activity that takes place when the adult client is unaware of the consequences or risks involved.
- Rape or attempted rape.
- Sexual assault or harassment.
- Non contact abuse e.g; voyeurism or pornography.

Psychological abuse:

- Emotional abuse.
- Verbal abuse.
- Humiliation and ridicule.
- Threats of punishment, abandonment, intimidation or exclusion from services.
- Isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- Deliberate denial of religious or cultural needs.
- Failure to provide access to appropriate social skills and educational development training.

Financial abuse:

- Misuse or theft of money.
- Fraud or extortion of material assets.
- Misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.

Neglect and acts of omission:

- Ignoring medical or physical care needs.
- Failure to access care or equipment for functional independence.
- Failure to give prescribed medication.
- Failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services.
- Neglect of accommodation, heating, lighting etc.
- Failure to give privacy and dignity.
- Professional neglect.

Discriminatory abuse:

- Discrimination demonstrated on any grounds including sex, race, colour, language, culture, religion, politics or sexual orientation.
- Discrimination that is based on a person's disability or age.
- Harassment and slurs that are degrading.
- Hate crime.

The aim of this Policy is to;

- secure the safety of vulnerable adults
- promote the welfare of vulnerable adults
- improve the health of vulnerable adults
- enhance the quality of life of vulnerable adults.

Remember we have a duty of care to those who attend the drop in and take part in activities of the Trust. We must be aware of people's needs and make sure we treat vulnerable adults in the correct manner.